

At-Home COVID Testing

There are two types of self-testing options authorized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA):

1. **At-home self-collection** devices, which allow an individual to collect a specimen at home and ship it to a certified lab for analysis (requires a prescription)
2. **At-home self-tests**, which allow an individual to test and obtain a result for a self-collected specimen at home. (no prescription required)

This guidance focuses only on at-home self-tests.

It is important to know that results from at-home self-test devices might not be accepted for certain purposes, such as documentation for ending quarantine, before a medical procedure, or prior to air travel. If a test result is required for a specific purpose, please check with the entity requiring it (for example, the airline or the healthcare facility) to see whether an at-home self-test would be acceptable.

What if your test is positive?

If you have symptoms or have had a recent contact with someone with COVID-19, a positive test result means you have COVID-19. You should immediately isolate following CDC and [DHEC guidance](#). Isolation means you should stay home and away from others, even inside your home. Generally, you need to stay in isolation until:

- Your symptoms are better – AND
- At least 10 days have passed since your illness started – AND
- You have no fever for at least 24 hours without using fever-reducing medication

You should also notify anyone you have recently been in close contact with to let them know you tested positive for COVID-19. There are tools available to assist you on the [DHEC website](#) and you may notify your contacts anonymously, using [TellYourContacts.org](#). If you have worsening symptoms, you should contact your healthcare provider.

If you have no symptoms and no recent contact with someone with COVID-19, a positive test result might mean you have COVID-19 or it might be a false positive. You should immediately isolate and consider contacting your healthcare provider to determine if you should receive a confirmatory test or find a testing location where you can get a PCR COVID-19 test. If you do not obtain a COVID-19 confirmatory test within two days following your at-home self-test, you should continue to follow isolation guidance and steps above.

What if your test is negative?

If you do not have symptoms and have not had close contact with someone with COVID-19, a negative test means that you probably do not have COVID-19. You should continue to take

precautions: wear a mask, distance 6 feet apart from people outside of your household, and wash your hands or use hand sanitizer.

If you have symptoms or close contact to someone with COVID-19, and you have a negative result, you should continue to stay home and away from others and contact your healthcare provider to determine if you should obtain a confirmatory test in case your at-home self-test result is not accurate. A confirmatory PCR test may be recommended for you to determine if your illness is caused by COVID-19.

What if your results are invalid?

If your at-home self-test shows an error or invalid result, refer to the instructions in the package insert and contact the manufacturer for assistance. You may consider finding a nearby testing location or repeat the at-home test using a new at-home self-test device.

Test Disposal

After you obtain your results, discard your at-home self-test as described in the disposal instructions in the package insert. You cannot reuse test devices or other components. Most test kits can be disposed of in the general trash, but some kits contain batteries that have specific disposal instructions.

Sharing your results

If your at-home self-test was positive and your symptoms remain mild, you should isolate and notify your contacts of your positive test, but it is not required to contact your health care provider or health department. There are tools available to assist you in notifying your contacts anonymously, such as [TellYourContacts.org](https://www.tellyourcontacts.org). If you have worsening symptoms, you should contact your healthcare provider.

What if you have been fully vaccinated for COVID-19?

If you have been fully vaccinated and have no symptoms of COVID-19, you do not need to test or quarantine even if you had recent contact with someone with COVID-19. Fully vaccinated means at least 2 weeks after your second dose of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, or 2 weeks after your single dose of Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) vaccine. If you are not fully vaccinated, or if you have symptoms of COVID-19, you should be tested. The results of the tests would mean the same thing as described above.